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Ministry of Forests and Range

B.C. INVESTS IN FOREST SCIENCE AND RESEARCH

VICTORIA – The Province is investing $16.1 million in forestry research and extension that will improve timber growth and value, support sustainable forest management, and address mountain pine beetle priorities, Forests and Range Minister Rich Coleman announced today.

"These research projects will provide information that will continue to enable science-based, sustainable management of B.C.'s forest resources," said Coleman. "Studies on topics as varied as climate change, fire hazards, harvesting techniques and the mountain pine beetle emphasize the importance of British Columbia's forests and the value of research."

A total of 267 research and extension projects will be funded through the Forest Investment Account Forest Science Program (FIA-FSP) in locations throughout B.C. The funding will be for studies that range from one to three years, led by researchers at universities, provincial and federal governments, First Nations, companies and not-for-profit organizations.

Several climate change studies will assess the impact that changes in temperature and precipitation level may have on the sub-boreal spruce forest and interior grass lands ecosystems. Others will focus on the impact of weather changes on species including the Interior Douglas fir, and forest pests such as bark beetles.

A collaborative study by the University of British Columbia and the Gitxaala and Nuxalk First Nations aims to determine how First Nations, government and industry can develop sustainable forestry practices that enhance traditional First Nation economic activities. The research will incorporate traditional ecological knowledge of Gitxaala and Nuxalk community members into forestry practices. In addition, the FIA-FSP Forest Science Board will continue to work with the First Nations Forestry Council and communities to generate future partnerships and program involvement.

Wildfire studies will consider best practices for stand management in urban interface areas while others will investigate post wildfire flood, erosion impact and mitigation.

Mountain pine beetle research will include projects examining the combined effects of beetle infestation and salvage harvesting processes on waterflow and how to harvest beetle-killed lodgepole pine while protecting younger trees and non-pine species. The studies will help improve access and use of science and innovation in areas affected by the beetle.

Other research topics include the effects of livestock grazing in Southern Interior wetlands, studies involving mountain caribou, marbled murrelets and bats, and several long-term soil productivity and restoration studies. The soil research will allow B.C. to continue to contribute to the world's largest coordinated effort to understand how soil disturbance affects long-term forest productivity.

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"The FIA Forest Science Program contributes knowledge that helps to improve management practices and techniques," said Dr. Bill Bourgeois, chair of the Forest Science Board. "In addition to providing leadership in sustainable forestry, these studies build and bridge the network of the scientific community with on-the-ground forestry operations."

The FIA-FSP is also increasing funding and attention on the topical collection, analysis and sharing of existing research. The ongoing synthesis and distribution of data and results will help forest practitioners in making informed management decisions. Funding will continue to support graduate students in the second of a three year pilot project, which links forest sector sponsors with graduate students, to address key forest management priorities and develop expertise and specialists in targeted fields.

The program is also providing $2.8 million to the Provincial Forest Extension Program to deliver new and existing knowledge to those who plan and manage British Columbia's public forest lands.

The Province has invested more than $52 million since the founding of the FIA Forest Science Program in 2004. A call for proposals for projects for 2008/09 was issued in August. Information on the call and the Forest Investment Account's Forest Science Program 2007/08 business plan, listing currently funded projects, is available at www.fia-fsp.ca.

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1 backgrounder(s) attached.

Media contact: Jennifer McLarty
Public Affairs Officer
Ministry of Forests and Range
250 387-4592

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